THE known saying in the *New-Testament*, That a *Kingdom divided cannot stand*, is very seasonable at this Juncture, by all *Protestants* to be seriously considered: And if ever *Unity* (if not in *Worship*, yet in *Love* and *Affections*) will be necessary, it must certainly be *Now*; when the *Common Enemy* is seeking, by all means imaginable, to correct such *Divisions* amongst *Protestants*, as if possible to render them irreconcileable *One* to the *Other*. And though the *Differences* are not extraordinary; yet it has been the *Policy* of those that delight in the *Division* and *Destruction* of *Heretricks*, (as they call them) to widen the *Breaches*, and, as much as possible, divide the *Interest* of *Protestants*. To effect this *Design*, how often have we heard of the many *Disguises* and *Shapes* they have appeared in, among all sorts of *Protestants* (none excepted) and it is lamentable to think, how great an effect they have had on *Passionate Men*, of all *Persuasions*. But now, considering the circumstances of *Things*, and how darkly they appear to *Judicious* and *discerning Eyes*, it's high time for all *Parties* to lay aside *Pride*, *Passion*, or *Division*; and, as far as possible, agree to *Love* and *Serve* each *Other*. The doing of which, is the only effectual Means to establish a lasting *Union* among *Protestants*, and to subvert the *Designs* of *Plotting Men*, who would gladly over-turn our *Religion* and *Laws*. The *Considerations* above-mentioned, caused me to give the best *Advice* I could: I must confess, not only my inability, but also my engagement in Business, very much prevented my *Desire*: But however, what I here offer, comes from a sincere *Desire* for allaying the *Heats*, and uniting the *Interests* and *Affections* of *Protestants* in general. I hope, I shall not offer any think contrary to *Reason*, and the *Publick Good* of *Mankind*. I shall begin with the *Church of England*.

Worthy Sirs, The former *Passion* and *Violence* of some few *Rash Men* amongst you, together with their *Zeal* to serve an ungrateful sort of *Men*, rendred almost the whole *Body* obnoxious to the hard *Opinion* and *Censure* of many *Worthy Men*; insomuch, that those who were really *Members* of the *Church*, as by *Law* establish'd, were at a stand, and did not know what to think of the strange and unaccountable *Speeches* and *Actions* of many, both *Clergy* and *Laity*: But, as this Fault can be imputed to but a small part of you, so I have that *Charity* to hope, they are, by this time, fully convinced of their *Error*, and will act more Prudently for the future. The heat of a few *Rash Men* ought not to bring so Venerable a Body of Men into contempt; for by that Rule, the most *Innocent* would be lyable to answer for the most *Guilty*; the Injustice of which, can't be sufficiently declared with Abhorrence.

My humble Advice is; As you have always manifested your *Loyalty* to the *King*; so continue Obedient *Subjects*, as far as the *Laws of God* and the *Land*, warrant your *Obedience*, and no farther are you actively obliged to *Obey*; (as to your *Passive Obedience*, ye are no Strangers to the meaning of it; therefore, I wave it;) Let your *Obedience* to the *Divine* and *Human Laws*, thereto agreeing, be without the least Hesitation or Reluctancy: But, if any thing be commanded by *Man*, you must always remember your prime *Obedience* is due to *God*; and no *Commands*, *Threats*, or *Allurements*, ought to Influence you so, as to violate the *Laws of God*, or the *Land*; always have an Eye to the *Divine*, which infinitely supercedes any *Command* or *Human Law*. For Instance, if at any time you are required to renounce your *Sence* and *Reason*, and believe *Transubstantiation*, or to *Worship Images*, *Invocate Saints* and *Angels*, or any other thing, contrary to *Scripture*; or to change your Holy, Pure, and Sound *Religion*, to embrace another, abounding with *Novelties*, full of *Human Inventions* and *Absurdities*; and that has little or no foundation on *Scripture* or *Reason*: You are not, on any pretence whatsoever, to forsake your *certain Religion*, for the embracing of *One*, not only *dubious* but *dangerous*: And let me assure all wavering *Christians*, (who, for Worldly *Interests* and *Preferments*, care not what *Religion* they are of) That they cannot Answer it to *God*, if they make Shipwrack of a good *Conscience*, by turning from a safe and rational *Religion*, to that which is not only *unreasonable*, but very *ridiculous*, in the judgment of all Good *Christians*. Since the *Protestant Religion* is founded on *Reason* and *Truth*, consonant to the *Holy Scriptures*, the practice of the *Apostles*, and *Primitive Christians*, in all *Ages*; you, and all that desire to approve themselves sincere *Protestants*, ought to continue stedfast in that *Divine Faith*, you profess your selves *Members* of. If your *Religion* was built only on the *Sandy Foundations* of *Tradition*, *Infallibility*, &c. you might have some tollerable *Plea* for altering your *Opinion*; but as long as your *Religion* teaches you *Obedience* in all Things to *God*, and likewise to your *Soveraign*, in which you have sound Expositions of the *Divine Truths*, the *Sacraments* duly and truly administred in *both kinds*, according to *Christ's Institution*; the *Scriptures* no ways *Lock'd up* from *Clergy* or *Laity*, (Because all these; and what-ever more is necessary for the ordering of a *Christian's Conversation*, is to be found in the *Protestant Religion*) I can't conceive, why any one should change his *Profession*. *Worldly Interests*, *Troubles*, or *Temptations*, ought to have no sway or force with us, when they come in competition with our *pure Religion*. I have enlarged the more on this *Head*, by reason now is a time of greater tryal than formerly; and that some, who not long since esteemed themselves *Pillars* of the *Protestant Faith*, have now, for sinister Ends, without *Reason*, departed from it. But let them seriously consider, there is a *God* above, who will not be *Mocked*. Such *unstable Souls* I shall leave to that *God*, who judg-

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eth all Men, and rewardeth All according to their *Deeds*, whether *Good* or *Evil*.

In the next place, Let the *Laws* of the *Land* be your *Rule*; Be ſure give no advantage to the *Common Enemy*, either by a partial Execution of them, or by doing leſs than the *Laws* allow: neither ſtrain them too *high*, nor let them be as a *Cypher*, which will ſignifie nothing, without the *Figure* of *Execution*. As the publick Good and Welfare of *Mankind*, was the deſign of all *Laws*; ſo the Conformity to, and Execution of them, ought to have the ſame tendency. To ſtrain any *Law* beyond the deſigned *Good*, or *Intent* of the *Legiſlators*, is a moſt ſevere and unjuſt *Oppreſſion*; and to *ſuſpend*, or let wholeſome and beneficial *Laws* lye *dormant*, without all due Execution for the *Publick Good*, does not only ſhew the unfaithfulneſs of the *Magiſtrate*, to whom the *Executive Power* appertains; but alſo, how little he minds his *Sworn Duty*, which is to ſee the *Laws* duly put in *Execution*; and *Juſtice*, according to them, equally diſtributed without *Partiality*; and how any can Anſwer the *nullifying* them, without a Lawful *Abrogation*, by the ſame *Power* that *Enacted* them, I can't poſſibly conceive; for the common approved Maxim is, *That Power, only that made any* Law, *has ſufficient Authority to ſuſpend or repeal the ſame*. The Laws of the *Land*, ſo long as they are founded on *Reaſon*, and found beneficial to the *Publick Peace* and *Welfare* of the *Kingdom*, ought to be kept Inviolable, and maintain'd by All; but more eſpecially by thoſe that have any ſhare in the *Execution* of them. We ſhould reckon him a *Mad-man*, that ſhould *un-tile* his Houſe, under pretence of keeping out the *Rain*. Likewiſe, if a Governour of a well Fortified City, who wanted for no Accommodations requiſite for the defence of it, ſhould, without any juſt cauſe of Fear of his Inconſiderable Enemies, either out of *Cowardice* or *Perfidiouſneſs*, betray the City, and make himſelf and them, not only void of *Power*, but in effect *Slaves* to the Will and Pleaſures of that part of Men, to whom he and they might have bid defiance. What can we ſay or think of ſuch *Eſau's*, that are ready to ſell their *Birth Rights* for a *Meſs* of *Pottage*, but that they ſhall not deſerve any *Compaſſion*? and if they undergo the greateſt *Evils*, they will have the juſt *Reward* they have deſervedly Merited. I ſhould not pity any Man, that, under pretence of keeping out *Thieves* and *Robbers*, ſhould open the *Door*, and let them in; wholly truſting to their good *Breeding*, *Kindneſs*, and *Honeſty*; not in the leaſt believing they would be ſo *unmannerly*, as not only to ſecure him, by binding his *Hands* and *Feet* that he could not help himſelf, but alſo Rob him of all that was worth their carrying away; ſtopping his *Mouth* that he could not complain of his hard *Uſage*, or call for any help, to free him out of his miſerable *Condition*. I wiſh, in the Land of *Utopia*, there were not too many, that would ſhew the ſame kindneſs to thoſe kind Hearted *Chriſtians*, that ſhould diveſt themſelves of the *Power* and *Security*

the *Law* gives them, and meerly trust to their good *Nature*, for their *Religion*, and all their *Liberties* and *Properties*. Any Man, with whom the Administration of *Justice* is Intrusted, or that has the Honour to be Elected a Member of *Parliament*, for the Service of his *King* and *Country*; for such a Man to betray his *Trust*, either by *parting* with those *wholsome Laws*, that long experience tells us, are absolutely necessary, and most beneficial to the *Common-Wealth*; or by condescending to the unreasonable *Desires* and *Endeavours* of an inconsiderable sort of Men; or by not *obstructing*, but *consenting* to the Enacting of *New Laws*, destructive to the *Common Good*; He is most unworthy of the *Trust* reposed in him, and deserves the severest *Punishment* the *Law* will admit of: No *Contempt*, *Disgrace*, or *Derision*, can be bad enough for such a Man, that to serve his own particular private *Interest*, will *Sacrifice* the *Publick*. All *Members of Parliament*, when they design to make any *Laws*, ought throughly to consider, what *Good* or *Benefit* will accrue to the *Subjects* thereby; and if, upon mature Consideration, they see a necessity of Enacting such *Laws*, by no means ought they to be *omitted*, or *laid aside*. On the other side, if former *Parliaments* had, for weighty *Reasons*, made several *Acts* for the security of our *Religion* and *Laws*; before these *Laws* be made void by a *Repeal*, due respect ought to be had to the circumstances of *Things* and *Times*; and, after a strict and impartial Enquiry be made, if it shall appear that the Repealing those *Acts* will not only very much *injure*, but really *endanger* the *Publick Peace* and *Welfare* of the *Kingdom*; then, notwithstanding the Solicitations of a *Party*, whose *Interests* oblige them to desire it, they ought not to part with *Laws* which will prove as an *impregnable Bulwark* against our *Enemies*. To make void an useful and necessary *Law*, under a pretence of doing *Good* to the *Publick* thereby, is like the taking up of a *Sluce* to *prevent* an *Inundation of Water*. I may rather compare it to the throwing of *Combustible Matter* into an House on *Fire*, thinking thereby to *Extinguish the Flames*; which is so far from putting a period to them, that, on the contrary, it heightens the *Flames*, that they are not (if at all) easily Mastered. I have heard our necessary *Laws* compared to the most useful *Damms* and *Banks* in *Holland*, to prevent the raging *Sea* from over-whelming them. It's well known to *Travellers*, of what a vast Importance those *Defences* are: for, should there be a considerable Breach made in any of those *Damms*, that secure them from the violence of the *Water*; not only many *Souls*, *Beasts*, and many other *valuable Things* wou'd be lost; but it would be an Immense Charge to repair them. But, though the damage to the *Netherlands* would be very great, should such a bad accident happen; yet it's the Opinion of *Wise men*, (and not without good grounds) that should *English-Men* and *Protestants* part with those *Laws*, that are like a *strong* and *impregnable Defence* to them, and their *Religion*, in *one Respect* it would be of a far worse consequence to them;

them; that is, the *loss* would be *irrepairable*; and *Ten Thousand* to *One*, if ever the like *Security* can be obtain'd. *Country-men* have an *Old*, but *True saying*; that is, *If you love to be free from a Broken Head, keep fast the Staff in your own hand*; so may you not only prevent your being *beaten* by your *own Weapon*, but, in case of an *Assault*, you may, by being in a posture of *Defence*, easily defend your self from *violent Hands*; whereas on the contrary, a *Naked Man* may easily be *Captivated*; and, whether he will or no, he will be constrain'd to submit to the *Mercy* of his *Insulting Enemy*. It's further observed, That after the *Rich Farmer* has, with much difficulty, gotten a good *Estate*, he remembers how hardly he *Labour'd, Toil'd*, and *Sweated*, before he brought things to so good an *Issue*; and the calling to mind his former Indefatigable Labour, has this effect on him, That since he obtain'd his *Riches* or *Substance* with no small *Care* and *Industry*, he is resolved, because he neither got it easily, nor can he dispence with the want of it, that he will not do like *Prodigal Sons*, who being Born to their *Estates*, and wholly Ignorant of their Parents *Care and Trouble* to provide for them, quickly squander away vast *Fortunes*: but though he may love his Children or Friends with all the real Affections imaginable; yet, says he, *Charity begins at home*; *I must not make my self a Beggar, and stand to the Courtesie of Children or Friends, for what I shall want to sustain me, so that I may comfortably end those days that remain*. For woful Experience too frequently informs us, *That Children and Friends too soon forget their Duty, and the innumerable Kindnesses of their tender Parents*. Since things are thus, let common Prudence dictate better things to us, than to part with what of right belongs unto us, or to let go that *lawful Security* we have, for all that is dear unto us; and by so doing, we may easily prevent our being made a Prey to our implacable *Enemies*, from whose tender Mercies, *Good Lord deliver us*. I might much more enlarge on this particular; but, should I proceed to enumerate all the manifest *Dangers* and *Inconveniencies* that I could easily insist on, I should cry out with the *Poet*, *Tanta molis erat Romanam condere gentem*.

In the third place, Let your Zeal for your Holy Religion continue, and let your *Moderation* be seen by your very *Enemies*; and let not the worst of them, have any just cause of laying any *severe* or *unbecoming Actions* to your charge: How will it please your *Enemies*, to see you *differing* and *dividing* your *Interest* and *Affections* with those? That a Worthy, and most Learned Member of your Church, in my hearing, lately Preach'd against excluding, by *Excommunication*, from *Communion* with you, for *indifferent Things*, which may be left *undone*, and yet *Salvation* obtained. The reasons he gave for so doing them, were, Because there were *many good Christians among them*; and, because they *protested against the same Errors, believed the same Articles of Faith, and hoped for the same common Salvation by Christ, that you do*. You

can't but be deeply sensible, how many Eyes are fixed on you, and what desires your *Enemies* have of seeing you exposed to *Publick Shame* and *Contempt*: Have *Charity* towards all Men, especially to all those of the *Protestant Religion*, that in any tollerable Measure conform to the Rules of it. As for your *Dissenting Neighbours*, (like the Reverend Doctors, *Till.* and *Ten.*) let your Love and Moderation be so great towards them, as if possible, though you cannot make them satisfied with your Reasons for *Conformity*; yet let your *Christian Charity* and *Affection* to them as *Protestants* and *Members* of the same Body you profess to be, have such an Influence over them, as to expel any Malice or prejudice they might have entertain'd against your Persons; and who knows, but such Methods as these, may have a great Influence towards a farther Conformity. It's my Opinion, (and not without Reason) That the bitter *Invectives* not long since, in and out of the *Pulpit*, created greater and fiercer Enemies against the *Church of England*, than otherwise she would have had; but as this has sometime since ceased, so *Charity* ought to be exercised, in forgeting what was amiss; in hopes the like may never be heard again.

My Advice to you *Dissenting Protestants*, is, for the most part, the same I gave to the *Church of England*: I need not enlarge any farther on the absolute necessity of *Unity* and *Charity* among *Protestants* at this Season, when it is very manifest, that nothing is more delightful or acceptable to those that hate the *Protestant Interest*, than to see one *Protestant* tending, tearing, and back-biting another: It being too apparent, that these *Fishers of Men* delight in *troubled Waters*, knowing it to be the fittest time and opportunity to overcome their *Heretical Enemies*, (for so they call *Protestants*) when their Dissentions among themselves are greatest. Therefore, I earnestly perswade and entreat you, as you tender the Peace and Welfare of the *Kingdom*, and the establishing your sound *Religion*, to put on a Spirit of *Meekness*, *Charity*, and *Complyance*, as far as possible, with the *Church of England*; and if you can't receive satisfaction enough from her Learned Members, throughly to *Conform*; yet let not your *Charity* be so narrow, as to have a bad Opinion of those Worthy Men, that are abundantly satisfied with the reasonableness of their *Conformity*. As you desire no harsh Censures be past on you for *Nonconformity*; so be sure you avoid reflecting on those Pious Men, that hold it lawful to assent and consent to all the *Articles* of the *Church of England*. If possible, have Peace with all Men, especially with those of the same Houshold of *Faith* you profess. Strongly endeavour to prevent bitter *Invective Speeches* against that Church; which, in all probability, is like to be the only Invincible *Bulwark* against *Popery*. And I am the more inclin'd to be an earnest Advocate for the *Church of England*, not only because I have hopes she has laid aside those bitter Things, formerly, with some Truth, laid to her charge; but chiefly because a vast number of her Worthy, and eminently Learned Members,

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have, with great Learning and Solidity defended our Holy Religion, from the *Hereſie*, *Schiſm* and *Novelty* falſly charged on it by the *Church of Rome*. All Perſons that Study any thing to the purpoſe, of the Controverſie betwixt us and them, muſt certainly perceive, how admirably they have confuted the unreaſonable and unaccountable Doctrines of that pretended Infallible *Church*; clearly proving the *Truth* and *Excellency* of the *Proteſtant Religion*; and that we are not (as they pretend) beholding to them for it: But evidently making it appear, that the *Proteſtant Faith* is moſt ancient, and that its Doctrine is conſonant or agreeable to the *Word of God*, and the practice of the *pureſt Chriſtians*, in the *Primitive Times*. This very conſideration alone, is ſufficient to clear the Body of that Church from being *Popiſhly affected*.

A ſecond Reaſon to Love and Eſteem them for, is, their firm adhering to the known *Laws* of the Land; for what-ever a few unſound *Members* of her *Communion* have done to the contrary, yet ſhe is not accountable for them; the greateſt and moſt conſiderable part, having been found very faithful on that account.

A third Thing, for which you ought to value the *Members* of the *Church of England*, viz. Their ſtedfaſt adhering to the Rights of the *People*, and eſpecially of the *Clergy*. Their *Conſciences* have been ſo juſt, that notwithſtanding the Angry Frowns of Majeſty have taken hold of them, and that they have, and are likely to ſuffer very much by it; they rather chooſe to truſt *God* with their Temporal Felicity and Comfort, than ſinfully violate thoſe Sacred Oaths they have ſo Solemnly taken, by betraying (in the leaſt) the Truſt repoſed in them; notwithſtanding the Frowns or Allurements of the greateſt Men. This only ſingle Inſtance of their ſignal Fidelity to *God* and *Man*, ought to have no ſmall ſway or Influence with all conſidering Perſons. He that orders his Converſation according to the Divine Rule, and faithfully Studies to preſerve the juſt *Rights* and *Lawful Liberties* of Mankind, deſervedly Merits the greateſt Love and Affection imaginable. But he that makes no Conſcience of his Duty to *God*, and deſignedly makes Ship-wrack of the Lawful Rights and Priviledges of any *Party* or *Society*, and that will Sell his Birth-Right for an inconſiderable Value, deſerves not the Name of a Man, or to be admitted into the Society of Mankind. I deſire you would imitate the *Church of England*, in all thoſe things for which I juſtly commend her. In the firſt place, Follow her Loyalty as far as you can, and not break the Laws of *God* nor *Men*, thereto correſponding. In the ſecond place, Be fervent and conſtant in the Sacred *Religion* you profeſs your ſelves Members of. You know, without doubt, the greateſt part of you, the Tranſcendent Excellency of your *Religion*; and therefore, if any of you ſhould, for Intereſt or Preferment, turn from *Truth* to *Falſhood*, from *Light* to *Darkneſs*, from a *Sound* to a *Corrupt Religion*; How great and unpardonable would ſo wilful a Sin be? And, to

ſpeak the Truth, I muſt do you the Juſtice to commend you for your firmneſs in your Holy Profeſſion; in that I have heard few or none, that have either gone over, or been perverted to the Communion of the *Church of Rome*, notwithſtanding the alluring Favours of that Church towards you, and practice of her *Clergy* and *Laiety* to gain Proſelytes among you. What I ſhall ſay on this Head, is, *Go on, and Proſper*; and, without doubt, the Spirit of Truth will guide and direct you for the beſt. In the third place, Imitate their Fidelity to the Laws of the Land: You can't, but with admiration, perceive how ſtedfaſtly they labour to preſerve them, and all the reaſonable Rights and Priviledges of the People. As you are Rational Men, profeſſing the *Proteſtant Religion*, and render the *Publick Good*, let not any uncertain Tranſitory Intereſt prevail with you ſo far, as baſely to give up your *Religion*, and the known uſeful *Laws* of the Land; be ſure you neither conſent to the ſuſpending or taking away any, that (to all Intelligent Men) are like to prove your only Security. When the *Country-man* deſigns to preſerve his *Grain*, from thoſe Creatures that would Eat it up, or otherwiſe ſpoil it, he is far from rooting up the Fence that ſecures it: So ought you carefully to preſerve the Laws, for your own and the Publick Safety. Things at preſent look, to you perhaps, with a good Aſpect: I wiſh, they may long continue in that condition: But, if the courſe of things ſhould mightily alter, and theſe *Halcion Days* (of which you have no aſſurance) ſhould not long continue, how greatly would your hopeful expectations be fruſtrated? Therefore, be ſure you do not imprudently purchaſe your preſent Liberty, and ſeeming Favours, at too dear a rate; for ſuch Acts may wholly deprive you of the Favours, that you may otherwiſe expect from the next Succeſſor, *&c.* But ſtrenuouſly endeavour to manifeſt to the World, that your former great out-cries againſt the leaſt Invaſions of your *Religion*, *Liberties*, *Properties*, and the *Laws* of the Land, were really in earneſt; and, that as then you truly hated thoſe that were in any meaſure guilty of them; ſo now, if ſomething lyes in your Power, you will not by the greateſt Perſwaſions and Promiſes of Kindneſſes, be wrought on, to part with the *Laws* of the Land, becauſe you can't well be Ignorant of the fatal conſequence of ſo doing. If you either give us the Laws, or ceaſe to execute thoſe that are moſt neceſſary, you not only highly ſerve and gratifie your known *Enemies*; but by betraying your *Truſt* you will render your ſelves extraordinary Odious in the Opinion of moſt Men; in that you are unfaithful to what you formerly ſo much cryed up, *viz.* That the *Laws* might flouriſh, and *Juſtice* might duly and impartially be diſtributed, and all Men quietly poſſeſs what of right belongs to them. No Honeſt *Man*, or good *Chriſtian*, will diſſwade you from Serving or Obeying your Soveraign, as far as is Lawful: But, in all Obedience, ſtrict recourſe muſt be had to the Divine and Humane *Laws*, that the Limits of neither be Tranſgreſſed; and then the

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Iſſue of ſuch Obedience, will be of no ill conſequence to you or the Publick; Such Obedience will redound to your Immortal Honour.

Fourthly, Conſider, if the the *Papiſts* in *England* were not of a rigid, violent, and ambitious Nature, they would not make all this ſtir about the *Teſt*, which debars them from a ſhare in the Government. In *Holland* we know, that though the *Papiſts* are very Peaceable, and have given many Years Teſtimonies of their good Behaviour, under a *Proteſtant* Power; yet the *States*, for their own and the Publick Safety, will admit none of them into any *Offices*. I am of Opinion, and not without Reaſon, *Roman Catholicks* here, can't give ſo good an account of their Peaceable and Chriſtian Behaviour, as thoſe in *Holland* can: Therefore, greater Arguments may be produced, why no Power ought to be granted to them in *England*: It being notoriouſly known, that though their Prince be a Juſt Man, valuing his Word, yet a reſtleſs Zeal moves the *Papiſts* (*manibus pedibuſque*) to advance what they call *Catholick Intereſt*; which, without any Reſtraint, will not keep within the bounds of Moderation.

But if the *Laws* are taken off, I know not of any Obſtruction they can meet with; then we muſt expect to be *Govern'd wholly by Papiſts*, and the conſequence of ſuch a Government muſt be terrible to *Proteſtants*; for what can they expect leſs than *Popiſh Lords* and *Commons*; and from ſuch a *Parliament*, what leſs than a perfect eſtabliſhing of *Popery* by a *Law*; and, without doubt, when ſuch *Laws* are Enacted in favour of that *Religion*, as ſevere will be made againſt the *growing of Proteſtant Hereſie* in *England*, from ſuch *Laws*, and ſuch *Times*, *God* in Mercy deliver *England*. Pray, therefore, conſider, if you once give the *Papiſts* ſo much Power, whether, ſo ſoon as they have it, they will not make ſeverer *Teſts* againſt *Proteſtants*, than ever were made againſt the *Church of Rome?* The late Famous Actions of the *French* King, and the *Marian* Kindneſs of old, to *Hereticks*, are convincing Evidences of the Lenity and Moderation of a Government, wholly in the hands of *Papiſts*. As for the Happineſs, and flouriſhing of Kingdoms or Republicks, under the *Papiſts*, See the contrary in Dr. *Burnet's Travels*.

The *Romaniſt's* great Ambition, and eager deſire to be in Eminent Places of Truſt, is enough to convince any Rational Man, that for no mean or inconſiderable Enterpriſes, do they contend for them: They think if once they can get into the *Saddle*, with greater eaſe they may Ride the poor *Hereticks*. I would adviſe you to Ponder, with great deliberation, the *Natures*, *Diſpoſitions*, and eſpecially the *Intereſts* of thoſe Men, that with might and main labour to take off the *Teſt*: And if it ſhall appear, (as doubtleſs it will) 'tis a grievance to thoſe only, that eſpouſe a Forreign Intereſt, directly contrary to yours; and that the *Teſt* is a ſtrong defence to preſerve you. I hope you will manifeſt your real Love and Kindneſs to this Nation, by undergoing, for a time, as great Severities as ever, rather than in any degree be Inſtrumental

in ruining of this now happy Kingdom (I mean in her *Laws*). I would gladly know of any Ambitious *Papist*, Whether it would not be more unreasonably bold for him to desire a share in that Government, from which he is Legally excluded, than for a *Hugonet* in *France*, where, as I never heard, were any *Laws* to exclude him, to desire to be prefer'd to no small Offices: I am verily perswaded the Body of the *Papists* there, would be very unwilling to be Govern'd by him; I think the case is not parrellel, and that the *Protestants* ought to insist much more on the same Priviledge in *England*.

In the *Fifth* place, Seriously think of the professed Kindness of your new Friends of the *Church of Rome*, you may and ought to consider, *Cui bono, For what good or design*, is so great Friendship pretended, and so many Favours now on a suddain confer'd and accumulated on you; who, not long since, were esteemed unworthy of Life: You may well enquire, what occasioned so great a *Calm*, after so violent and *Tempestuous a Storm*. It must, certainly, be matter of the highest admiration to you, to see the wonderful Moderation and Clemency of the *Roman Catholicks* at this time to you obstinate *Heretick*s; especially since the Members of that *Church* are now in so great Power: I say, to see a *Church*, whose Principles are directly opposite to the *Protestant Interest*, so careis *the strictest sort of them*; when as, not long since, the greatest Violence and Cruelty imaginable, to extirpate them, was thought not only lawful, but necessary; it's well if you find these Kindnesses real, and not to make you, what you hate to be, *Tools* for a Design both dangerous and dishonourable: To see Men, one while, breath out nothing but *Invectives* against the *Reformed*, at another time, if it more serves their purposes, fawning and courting *Heretick*s, is enough to put considering Men on their Guard. Such unexpected Kindnesses may put you on enquiry.

First, Whether you come nearer in Belief or Practice to that *Church* now? or, whether you be as guilty of *Heresie* (as she calls it) as ever?

Secondly, Whether the usual Spirit of Persecution, and Antipathy to *Protestants* (though at present in *England* restrain'd) be not as predominant in *France*, and other places, as ever? It's well if *Roman Catholicks* can Act contrary to their known and beloved Principles, in puting on a Moderation and Temper suitable to the *Gospel*. If it be clearly evinced, that *Protestant Dissenters* have not in the least obliged the *Papists*, by their receeding or departing from their own Principles; or by their favourable construction of the Articles and Opinions of the *Church of Rome*; then it is visible their designs are (since the *Church of England* will not serve their turn) if possible, to make the *Dissenters* their *Tools*, they being the last Refuge they can fly to, in order to their Assistance. The late Actions of the *Papists*, towards you, bespeak your favourable Opinion: But the too well known Maxim amongst the *Romanists*, *That Faith is not to be kept with Hereticks*, doth justly cause *Protes-*

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ſtants to expect no real or greater Kindneſſes from them, than conſiſts with their *Intereſts* or *Deſigns* to manifeſt. If the *Papiſts* ſhew you outwardly great Reſpect; and, for Siniſter Ends, treat you as Friends for a while, till you have ſerved their turn, by taking off the *Teſt* and *Penal Laws*, that they might be on as equal Terms as you: It's not only *Mine*, but the Opinion of *Ten Thouſand* more; that not only you, but the Nation will dearly pay for the Kindneſſes you have received from them: And, let me tell you, if things are ſo ordered, you may Whiſtle for any place of Truſt in the *Government*: And when all the Adminiſtration of *Juſtice* is wholly in the *Romaniſts* (as doubtleſs then it will be) you *Hereticks* muſt be content with ſuch as can be got: For I know not where you can expect any Redreſs, or to whom you can appeal. Theſe Conſiderations, I hope, will make you perceive as great a neceſſity of continuing thoſe *Laws*, as ever there were of Enacting them; eſpecially the *Teſt*. Pray *God* direct you, that you may act Prudently, for your own Credit, and the Nations Good. I have great cauſe to hope well of you, becauſe, for the moſt part, you are Men of Conſideration and Underſtanding, that ſcorn to be Acceſſaries, much leſs the chief Actors, in ſubverting the happy Conſtitution of our Government.

I make no queſtion but your wiſe Carriage, at this time, by being faithful to your *King*, your *Religion*, and the *Laws*, will ſo far reconcile you to the favour of the *Church of England*, that when ever a ſeaſonable Opportunity ſhall offer for the eaſing of you in a Legal way, her Members will readily conſent to it; for they will not be ſo void of all Gratitude, as wholly to forget your firmneſs to your Religion, and the neceſſary Laws of the Land; but if you Act contrary to the Intereſt of *Proteſtants*, and of the Nation, you can expect only the ſhort Favours of the *Church of Rome*; and not eaſily to be admitted into the favourable Opinion of the *Church of England*, nor receive thoſe Kindneſſes from her, which otherwiſe you might expect. And I muſt profeſs, you will deſerve none of her Favours, if you ſtudy more to ſerve the *Roman*, than the *Proteſtant Intereſt*: But I hope better things of you.

I ſhall not enlarge, having (I hope) writ enough to have convinc'd you already. I ſhall Anſwer one grand *Objection*, relating to the *Penal Laws*; The *Teſt* (as I can underſtand) being not much Inſiſted on; unleſs by ſome Mercenary Men, whoſe Writings are all they have to depend on. The popular Argument, for a preſent Repeal, with ſome timerous and paſſionate *Diſſenters*, is this, That the Members of the *Church of England*, are of a Perſecuting Spirit; and as one, the other end of the City, ſaid, *That while theſe Rods* (meaning the *Penal Laws*) *are in their hands, they will be continually laſhing* Proteſtants: Therefore, it is (as he ſaid) the higheſt piece of Prudence to take them off, while it is in their Power. I always heard a great account of the Gentleman, that his Memory was very good, his Parts very

eminent: If ſo, I can't but admire he forgets, or at leaſt underſtands not, from whence thoſe ſevere Orders, for ruining *Diſſenters*, came: Nay, farther, for what Ends and Deſigns things were ſo violently carried on. Perhaps it may farther be Objected, That many of the Divines of the *Church of England*, often Zealouſly preſſed this Perſecution. I'll grant the Accuſation in part; but I can the better excuſe thoſe hot Men, when I conſider what *Motives, Incentives, and Promotions came from that end of the City, that now ſo much condemns the Church of* England *for her Zeal to Serve the King in that particular:* Since things were ſo carried, that no *Clergy-Men* were eſteemed or preferred unleſs he would comply with *Courtly Orders*, in *Thundring* againſt *Diſſenters*. As there are, amongſt Men of all Perſwaſions, Ambitious, Indigent Men; ſo, I confeſs, there were ſome few ſuch as Mr. *Thompſon* of *Briſtol*, among the *Church of England* Divines: But for the Richer and more Learned part of that vaſt Body, I am fully convinc'd, few, if any, were of that Perſecuting Spirit. Farther, The Worthy Members of the Church of *England* are grateful Underſtanding Men; and I have that Charity for them, as not to imagine, That if the *Diſſenters* be, to their Power, Friendly and Serviceable to the Church of *England* now; if it ſhould ever lye in her Members Power hereafter, but that a trebble return of Kindneſs and Gratitude would by them be made.

Laſtly, To conclude, I muſt profeſs, that I hate a Perſecuting Spirit in Men, pretending to Chriſtianity; and I do freely declare, I ſhould heartily rejoyce, if this time were a fit opportunity to relieve the *Diſſenters*; but, were I in their condition, as I had already undergone much, ſo, by the Aſſiſtance of *God*, I would Suffer much more, rather than, like *Sampſon*, who, when he had loſt part of his Strength, for Revenge, with what he had left, pull'd down the Houſe, not only on the *Philiſtines*, but on his own Head. Such a Fooliſh Revenge would be but a poor ſatisfaction to a Rational Man: How aptly the compariſon is made, I leave to underſtanding *Diſſenters* to conſider.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

I Had almost forgot Two weighty Considerations; The first is, You ought to consider, and seriously reflect on Courtly Favours and Promises; and how the Court opposed the Kindnesses design'd for you by the Westminster *Parliament: I must acquaint you, That Three Parts in Four, of that Parliament, were strict* Church of England-Men; *and that they had such a respect for you, that they unanimously passed a* Bill *for easing of* Protestant Dissenters; *And I can't conceive, why it was by the Court obstructed, unless because it did not extend to the* Papists, *as well as* Dissenters: *However, for Reasons best known to themselves, instead of Presenting the* Bill *to King* Charles *the Second, to have his Royal Stamp, it was lost (a thing never heard of before): This Act will sufficiently clear the major part of the* Church of England, *from that Odious Accusation of being Promoters of that Persecution, then so vigorously carried on: And since it clears them, it must fall heavy somewhere: I do not affirm, the* Papists *had any hand in losing that* Bill; *but I know not what to think of it. No Man can doubt, but that great Kindness to* Protestant Dissenters, *was really by that Parliament designed: But there was a considerable Party then in being, with whose Interests, Designs, and Glory, such Lenity could not then consist, what ever it may do now.*

Secondly, *Some great Advocates for Repealing the* Test, *pretend to an Expedient for it; and declare, they will part with it, provided such Security as can be proposed, may be gotten: As an Expedients, in another Case, was thought Odious and Ridiculous; so now, a* Nominal, *and not a* Virtual *Obligatory Law, ought to have the same Fate. It's my Opinion, If the pretended Expedient be as Valid and Secure to* Protestants *as the* Test, *it would be equally indifferent for the* Papists *to let you keep what you have: And some think, if you must have a* Test, *it will not be grateful to the* Roman Catholicks. *Wherein lyeth the Kindness*

of the King, if he parts with any Law, and at the same time grants another as severe, to Exclude his Subjects, (whom He thinks Worthy) from all publick Places of Trust. I must freely tell you my Mind, as you are concern'd for preserving your Religion, and what is dear to you, and us All, Remember, and abide by that common Proverb, One Bird in Hand, is worth Two in the Bush. You would reckon a Purchaser (though he were sure of a Pennyworth) very imprudent, if he should Pay the full Value for his Land, before he were sure to receive a satisfactory Title from the Vender. As to the Promoters and Patriots of an Expedient, in lieu of the Test, In the first place, are they sure such a thing will be granted? I put the Query, because, if I am not misinformed, the Draconical Author had no Thanks for proposing it, in his Answer to the Letter to a Dissenter.

To Conclude, I shall give you my Sentiments in a plain Intelligible Instance: I can as soon be wrought upon to believe an Ignorant Pretender, that shall pretend to take out my Sound Teeth, and put in a better Set in the room of them, as to Credit the Promoters of an Expedient. As I should admire at the Confidence of the former, so I should be amazed at the Ignorance of the latter. I believe the impossibility of my getting new substantial Teeth, and their getting as firm Security for the Protestant Religion, in place of the Test, will be alike equal. Therefore, be Prudent, and consider the danger of altering a well-Establish'd Government: For, it's manifest, when things are in Confusion, it's a hard matter to set them right again.

FINIS.